STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Recent years have witnessed a widespread increase of interest in the alteration and expansion of consciousness. The discovery of the psychedelic substances such as LSD, psilocybin and mescaline has been a major contributing factor in this development. Scientists and scholars from diverse areas as well as many laymen have recognized the importance of these substances as powerful tools for the exploration of consciousness and the production of visionary experiences. The effects of psychedelic substances pose fascinating problems for medical and psychological research and have far-reaching implications for many issues in the sciences and the humanities.

The Psychedelic Review is designed to serve as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about these issues. It will publish original research reports, scholarly and historical essays, outstanding phenomenological accounts of spontaneous or induced transcendent experiences, and reviews of relevant pharmacological and other literature.

The journal is published and sponsored by the International Federation for Internal Freedom (IFIF), an organization whose purpose is "to encourage, support and protect research on psychedelic substances." The basic long-range goal of IFIF is to work to increase the individual's control over his own mind, thereby enlarging his internal freedom. The present journal is an attempt to contribute to the realization of this long-term objective.

However, the views expressed in articles published by The Psychedelic Review are solely the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or of IFIF. Conversely, the contributors do not necessarily subscribe to the principles and purposes of IFIF.

A word about the title. The substances discussed here have been referred to by many different names, including "psychotomimetic," "hallucinogenic," "consciousness-expanding" and others. The term "psychedelic," first proposed by Humphrey Osmond, is derived from the Greek and means "mind-manifesting." Strict compliance with linguistic protocol would have dictated the usual intervening vowel (o), but the present orthography is gaining wider acceptance.

"Can This Drug Enlarge Man's Mind?"

Narcotics numb it. Alcohol unsettles it.

Now a new chemical called LSD has emerged with phenomenal powers of intensifying and changing it — whether for good or ill is a subject of hot debate.

Gerald Heard

Since earliest times man has felt impulses to rise above his everyday self and achieve either some higher insight or some release from mundane concerns — or both. Western saints and Eastern mystics have subjected themselves to strenuous spiritual exercises; others, less dedicated, have resorted to chemical aids, from the ceremonial wine of the ancients and the opiates of the Orient to the sacramental peyotl plant of Aztec tribes and the social stimulants of our own day.

In our time, moreover, psychologists and other students of human perceptions, from William James to Aldous Huxley, have tried out on themselves certain experimental drugs in an effort to induce states that would lend extraordinary lucidity and light to the mind's unconscious and creative processes — possibly even assistance to these. Today these newer drugs — mescaline, psilocybin, and the latest and most potent of them, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, or LSD — are spreading so widely on a "research" basis that major questions are arising as to their effects and proper use.

Their enemies call them "mind-distorting" drugs, and warn that their therapeutic values are unproven, that they may upset even a normal person, and that they are already being abused for "kicks." Their proponents prefer to call them "consciousness-changing" agents, and argue that in selected cases, for individuals of strong mental and creative powers, LSD may widen their window on the world and on themselves as well. On the evidence so far, both sides seem agreed that LSD is not habit-forming; numerous takers of it report that the experience is a strenuous and exhausting one, to be repeated only after much thought.

Should man in any case put such a potentially dangerous substance into his system? It is claimed for LSD that it is far less toxic